

Purification and Enlightenment Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
First Sunday of Lent • Year B • February 18, 2024

Catechist Preparation

FIRST READING—GENESIS 9:8-15

God establishes a covenant with Noah. The Lord promises never again to destroy humanity in a similar flood. In Baptism God floods us with his grace, wiping away sin and bringing about a new creation in us through his Son, Jesus.

SECOND READING—1 PETER 3:18-22

Christ is described as righteous. He is without sin and yet he suffers for sinners. In Baptism we are gifted with the very righteousness of Christ; we are put at rights with God, and every aspect of our relationship to the Almighty is in harmony with his will.

GOSPEL—MARK 1:12-15

The Spirit leads Jesus into the desert. The Lord is not spared temptation. He experiences what we ourselves experience. The difference is that he triumphs over Satan; he does not succumb to temptation.

Making Connections

Key Images and Symbols

Forty Days (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC] 540, 1095, 1348)

Life in the Spirit (CCC 686, 706, 729, 736, 1023, 1225)

Baptismal Covenant (CCC 977, 1219, 1223, 1254, 1267)

The Initiative of God (CCC 169, 604, 620)

Fidelity of Christ (CCC 609, 614, 623)

Music Suggestions:

“Safety Harbor” (R. Cooney/GIA)

“At the Name of Jesus” (C. Walker/OCP)

“The Fire Within the Night” (T. Conry/OCP)

Dismissal Session

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Have the space set with chairs in a circle. On a small table, place a purple cloth, a dish with ashes (or sand), and a cross or crucifix.

Respond

1. Invite the participants to reflect on the following questions quietly before sharing their responses with the group :
What did you see or hear in the Liturgy of the Word?
What word, phrase, or image from the readings stays with you?
2. Invite the participants to share their observations about the environment of the church and the music sung during Lent. What do the environment and the music say about Lenten season?
3. Ask whether anything about today’s liturgy surprised them. If so, why?

Enhance

1. Invite the participants to quietly consider the following questions. (Note: Some participants might prefer to write their responses on a piece of paper or in a journal.)
In what way do you experience temptations, and how do you respond to them?
How is today’s Liturgy of the Word inviting you to enter more deeply into Lent?
2. After a few moments of silent reflection, invite several volunteers to share their responses to the second question.
3. Use the following points to summarize the discussion:
 - Lent is a time of spiritual recollection (retreat time) to prepare for Christian Initiation and, in particular, the baptismal renunciations and promises.
 - Lent is a time to sort out what leads us into a deeper relationship with God and what leads us away from God.

Pray

Use Prayer of Exorcism 94F from the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

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Extended Catechesis Session

(Approximately 45 to 60 minutes)

Sunday Word

Genesis 9:8-15

Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:12-15

Welcome

Begin by welcoming everyone who is present, including godparents, sponsors, team members, and spouses who are joining the group.

Uncover

1. Proclaim the First Reading, Genesis 9:8-15.

2. Ask:

What is the message of the First Reading?

What is the Covenant made with Noah?

3. Discuss the First Reading, highlighting the following points:

- God established a covenant with Noah to never again destroy the earth by flood. The rainbow is a sign of this covenant.
- In Baptism, God floods us with his grace, taking away all sin and making us “new” creations.
- Lent offers us—the whole Church—a time to reflect on this flood of grace received in Baptism and how we are using this wonderful gift of our loving God.

4. Use the Repent section of the participant handout and allow time for quiet reflection.

Purify:

1. Proclaim the Gospel, Mark 1:12-15.

2. Invite the elect to sit with their sponsors (godparents). Ask the following questions reflectively, allowing some time after each question for quiet conversation between the elect and his or her sponsor (godparent).

How do I understand this invitation to enter into “the desert”?

What is the desert for me?

In what way(s) do I experience being tempted by Satan?

In what way(s) do I experience God’s loving embrace of me?

In what way(s) do I experience the call to “Repent and believe in the gospel”?

3. Use the Renew section of the participant handout and allow time for reflection and discussion of the questions given there.

Enlighten:

1. Refer to the remaining sections of the participant handout. Discuss the following points:

- The Covenant established in Baptism is an ongoing relationship that will continue to deepen throughout one’s lifetime.
- The baptismal Covenant makes us God’s adopted children—brothers and sisters of Jesus, the Son of God—and thus heirs to Heaven.
- God always takes the initiative in our relationship with him. He patiently awaits our response. God will never withdraw the invitation, though we are free to accept or reject the invitation.

2. Explore Key Images and Symbols.

Live:

1. Encourage the elect and their sponsors/godparents to review their choices from last week and to be faithful in keeping those promises.
2. Encourage the elect and their sponsors/godparents to participate in parish Lent activities.
3. Conclude with participant handout’s section Preparing for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Pray:

Pray the Responsorial Psalm from today’s liturgy.